SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

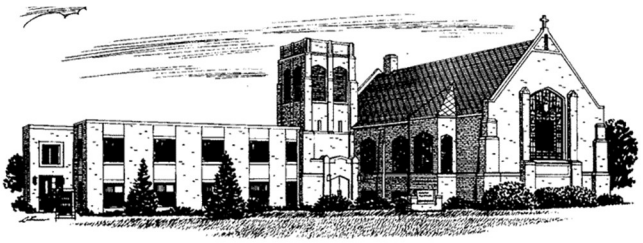
Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Typical Sunday at Saron:
Summer of 2023 (began May 28):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

Fall, Winter and Spring (begins Sep 10):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*



PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR AUGUST 2023

It will come as no surprise to you for me to say, "I love the liturgy." Perhaps it is more accurate to say, "I am thankful for the liturgy." Well, I love and am grateful for the way the liturgy, meaning "the work of the people", shapes our worship and gives meaning. I love how it gives form to what we do, how it connects us with generations of people who have used the same form, and many of the same words. I appreciate its connection to Scripture, as most of the liturgy is taken directly from God's Word. I love how it moves from Gathering, to the Word, the Meal, and then to Sending. And I love how it surprises me. Even when the words are the same, they can strike me differently depending on what's going on in my life, the church's life, the world, and what I bring to worship. Sometimes, though, the words are a bit different and they speak to me in a whole new way, or give me a different perspective.

Take for instance, our current Thanksgiving at the Table Prayer. It begins, "*We praise you, all-holy God, our maker, our lover, our keeper, for the universe beyond our knowing, for lands and seas and all their animals, and for friends and strangers and family, for homes and grocery stores and schools."* It makes me smile internally, and sometimes externally, each week we use it. I mean, how often is it that we refer to God as our lover, and give praise for the mystery of the universe as well as what we know and hold close, or pray for strangers and the (seemingly, at least for us) mundane of the grocery store? Food, yes, but grocery stores? The implications remind us of all that it takes to get the goods to the store.

Sure, the liturgy as we know and use it is not mandatory. But I find it useful and beneficial, not because it is tradition, but because it feeds my soul and helps me to focus my thoughts toward God. I pray that it does the same for you.

-Pastor Joan

We're welcoming several new members on August 27. Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about the faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, contact Pastor Joan.

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 9am-noon
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Kathleen & Phillip Preston are at Caretel in St. Joseph;
Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at the Willows in St. Joseph.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

8/1 Bradley Gorman
8/2 Joseph Ulrey
8/3 Ted Dosch
8/3 Tim Standen
8/4 Linda Huff
8/5 Emma Dipert
8/5 Brian Hohman
8/6 Nicholas Hooper
8/7 Edward Standen
8/8 Matilda Danielsky
8/9 Benjamin Baumgartner
8/9 Mary Smart
8/14 Asher de la Foret
8/14 Maggie Hammer
8/15 Dave Bailey
8/16 Tedd Gorman
8/18 Easton Bommarito
8/19 William Hicks
8/22 Irma Gorman
8/23 Andy Huff
8/24 Paula Risetter
8/24 Rebecca Sherry
8/26 Elizabeth Kunkel
8/27 Pam Olson

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

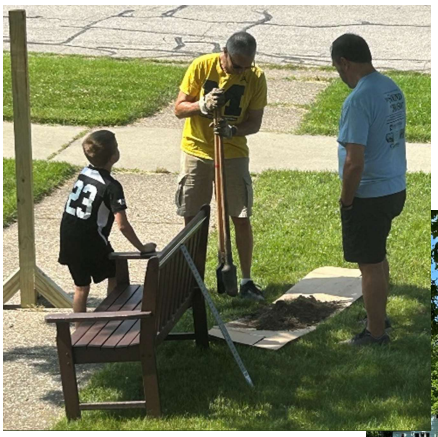
8/1 Matthew & Laurel Gacek
8/7 Nicole & Victor Coar
8/7 Brad & Marilyn Frey
8/15 T.J. & John Koehler
8/24 Jack & Cheryl Houser

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

NEW ADDITION!

As you may have seen, we've had a new addition to our side yard, near the office entrance. Yes, it's "Candy's Corner at Saron," containing books with benches alongside. Given by John Taylor in memory of his late wife, Candy, there are books to read and enjoy. As the sign says, "Sit awhile and enjoy the sweetness of reading. Please leave the book for someone else to savor." Our hope is that folks will come sit awhile, read to their child or grandchild, or just enjoy some quiet time on their own. The library, in the shape of a church, was made by Bruce Banghart, stained by John Taylor, and installed by John with the help of Ed Brunner.



Candy's Corner

We've all been there. You find something you like and it's no longer available. That's exactly what happened with the flooring we ordered for the sanctuary. What began as a shipping delay morphed into the product no longer being an option. We've made a new selection and it should be installed very soon. Watch for an announcement requesting help with moving furniture out then back in the sanctuary. As for the updates to our audio/video technology, we're making progress with most of the supplies now received. Before long, changes will be in place and we can't wait to show you what we can do!

As always, thank you for being with us on this journey and know that we will keep you informed until all projects are complete and all the money has been responsibly spent.

Worship

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we now have Sensory Bags available for use during worship or at other times when helpful. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made confidentially online via a link in our Thursday mailings. You may include as much detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are also invited to be part of the Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes. If you want to know more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Joan.

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Wednesday Zoom Coffee Hour at 11am as long as there is interest. All are welcome!

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page. We do not put names with the pictures. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Pastor.

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

August 6: 10th Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 55:1-5
Psalm 145:8-9, 14-21
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21

August 13: 11th Sunday after Pentecost
1 Kings 19:9-18
Psalm 85:8-13
Romans 10:5-15
Matthew 14:22-33

August 20: 12th Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 56:1, 6-8
Psalm 67
Romans 11:1-2, 29-32
Matthew 15: 21-28

August 27: 13th Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 51:1-6
Psalm 138
Romans 12:1-8
Matthew 16:13-20

Our youth group (middle school and high school kids) typically meets once per month after the service for food, fun and fellowship. Watch your email for more information on the next gathering. Friends are always welcome!

Contact Claudia at Staude.claudia@gmail.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

As of this writing, we are making final preparations for an awesome week of Under the Sea fun with 20+ kiddos. We will have lots of pictures in the next newsletter!

SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year will begin again on September 10. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

During August, we will continue week-to-week studies, focusing on the lessons and Gospel reading for the following Sunday, with perhaps a Father Casey Cole video here and there. Hope to see you there!

We meet **Tuesday evenings at 6pm** in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. All are welcome!

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Our Bible study continues during the summer months as we gather to study the upcoming Sunday's Gospel reading. We will meet on **Thursday mornings at 9:30am** outside, at the church building. This discussion is open to all interested in attending, for one session or many. Contact Pastor Joan if you have any questions.

During the program year, we typically meet the first and third Wednesday of each month in the lounge from 7pm to 8:30pm. We'll pick up again in the fall. Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.

We are trying something different by starting our new season of reading together earlier than usual! We encourage you to join us on **August 6 at 6:30pm in the lounge** to discuss Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver. "May be the best novel of 2022, Washington Post says... equal parts hilarious and heartbreaking. This is a story of an irrepressible boy nobody wants, but readers will love." It explores the complicated system of foster care and other social issues. We welcome everyone to attend any of the discussions that interest you. The more opinions we share, the better.

On September 10 (second Sunday) our book will again be one of the favorites of readers everywhere. Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus. "A gifted research chemist, absurdly self-assured and immune to social conventions in 1960's California, becomes the unlikely star of a beloved TV cooking show" (Washington Post). Stephen King calls it the "Catch 22 of early feminism." Mark your calendars!

Zoom will be available for meetings. If you want to be on the email list for this group, contact Kathy Cowall at (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com

When all else fails, give up and go to the library.
-Stephen King

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

We will NOT meet in August. The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 13 in the church lounge.

If you have any questions about this group, contact Melanie at 269/449-8399.

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made, creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy. -Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On June 22, Saron members Pastor Joan, Preston Akers, Dave & Kathie Bradley and Mia Bradley were very busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing and serving 114 meals. Guests enjoyed a ham dinner which included potato salad, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread and homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Laurie Capel, Mary Zylema, Marilyn Lucy and Mary Kynast.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

NOISY OFFERING

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your generous support!

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

The first step in getting involved, is getting informed. Register to receive their communications at https://swmichinterfaith.org/contact1

Looking ahead: A Celebration of the Harvest and Harvesters is on the calendar for October 1 at 3pm at Tabor Hill Vineyards. Watch for more details.

Support

The Support Committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

Other Bits of Awesomeness

Just a sample of the wonderful special music we've been blessed with this summer. Thank you to Denise, Nolan, and Christine!

More to come in August!

Looking ahead to September 10, we will return to our program year schedule with services at 8:30am & 11am with Learning Hour at 9:40am. The 11am worship will include the choir and be available via Zoom.

MIDWEEK BEACH WORSHIP AND PICNIC

On **Wednesday, August 23**, Saron folk are invited to join in food, fellowship, and a time of worship at Lions Park Beach. We will gather at **6pm** at the pavilion closest to the water treatment plant. Hot dogs and brats will be provided. Please bring a dish to share, as you are able. If you are a St. Joseph resident you can secure your free parking pass at City Hall. Parking is also free Monday through Thursday on the upper road (past the treatment plant) Questions? Contact Merrily Smith or Joe Ulrey.

BURIAL PLOTS AVAILABLE

Are you, or someone you love, in need of a burial plot? Saron has been gifted with two adult plots, which can be divided, at North Shore Memory Garden in Coloma, as well as a niche for two end-to-end caskets in the Mausoleum. We are offering these at a reduced current value with proceeds going to the Endowment Fund. If interested, or you have questions, contact Liz Kunkel (269/429-1132) or Pastor.

UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS
SHARING THE STORY OF JESUS
CRAIG ALAN SATTERLEE
CHELSEY SATTERLEE
You Are Witnesses of These Things Retreat
September 17-18, 2023
St. Francis Retreat Center
Dewitt, MI

Register now!

Centered on the book *You Are Witnesses of These Things*, this retreat is an opportunity to experience the joy and fun in sharing the story of Jesus for no reason other than Jesus is such life-giving good news. The retreat's primary audience is the baptized, people of God, or lay people but pastors and deacons are heartily welcome.

Visit https://craigasatterlee.com/retreat/you-are-witnesses-of-these-things-retreat for more information and to register. The cost is $85, covering food and lodging.

Have you ever thought about signing-up for ushering, greeting, reading or any of the other worship volunteer positions but wondered what all *exactly* was entailed? You are NOT alone. A training session will be held on **Sunday, August 13**, following worship. A repeat training session will also be held in September, along with a separate session for those interested in altar care. Questions? Contact Erik Bergh (906/290-3347) or Krin Jurgensen (269/369-4493).

VOLUNTEER SIGN UP VIA THE COMPUTER

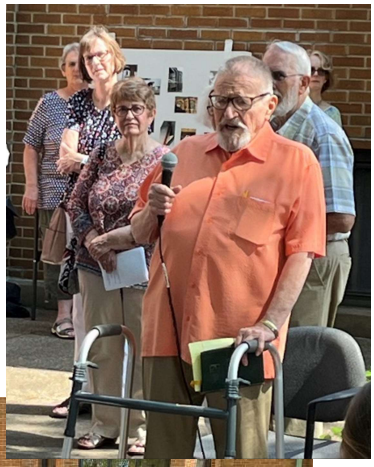
SignUpGenius

You often hear and read us asking you to sign up for worship volunteer positions, altar flowers, hosting Sunday snacks, Soup Kitchen slots, and more through links in the weekly emails. But, how do you really do that? Here are the steps:

- In the weekly e-news "Saron Update" click on any button that say along the lines of "Click to Volunteer." You do not need to create an account so ignore any messages that indicate otherwise and also ignore all the ads as they are there to keep the site free for our use. NOTE: you *can* create an account if you wish to make it easier to track/edit your volunteer slots.
- Volunteer needs are listed by date and position, with a brief description of the role. Scroll to see where you might like to volunteer. The system will tell you if the needs are met for a slot or if more help is required. Click in the box next to "Sign Up" to put a checkmark on the slot you want. Note: you can put checkmarks in as many boxes as you wish and sign up to fill various needs weeks or months in advance all at one time!
- Once you have put checkmarks on any volunteer slots you want, click the "Submit & Sign Up" button at the bottom of the screen.
- Fill in the blanks with your contact information then click "Sign Up Now!" Again, ignore the various pop-up ads, unless you really have an interest in the product/service.
- You will receive an email to confirm your slot(s). In that email, there will be a link near the bottom that says "Edit My Sign Up" that will take you back into the system in case you need to cancel or make another change.
- Tip: If you are having difficulty on your phone, try using a computer. It is *much* easier. This is not meant to be stressful so if you need help or want to sign up another way, contact the church office or email/text Amanda if it's short notice: bradley717@gmail.com or 419/306-5780.

Bonus: we plan to have a "How-To" session after worship on August 6 and various other times in the near future that will even encourage you to try it out with helpful supervision!

Celebrating Saron Fortified



We came together on July 16 to burn the mortgage papers and also celebrate the many improvement and outreach opportunities that Fortify & Fly allowed us to accomplish. Thank you to those that planned the event but especially just THANK YOU to our congregation for sharing your lives and gifts with Saron.
We are blessed beyond measure.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

AUGUST 2023 NEWSLETTER

It's that time, where we become a blessing in our community by collecting school supplies for children in need of a little extra help having their best school year ever. Many times, when there is a lack of supplies, teachers simply buy them with their own money. Let's do what we can to make that not necessary for a few teachers at Lybrook Elementary in Eau Claire. Suggested items include crayons, colored pencils, markers, folders, notebooks, white board markers, Sharpies, tissues, disinfecting wipes and gifts cards to Meijer or Walmart. It will be greatly appreciated!

We'll collect supplies in the narthex until *God's Work. Our Hands.* Sunday (September 10).

AUGUST 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	VBS **July 31 – Aug 3** **6:30pm-8pm** →	**1** 6pm Bible Study	**2** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**3** 9:30am Bible Study	**4**	**5**
6 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**7** 11am Prayer Group	**8** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**9** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**10** 9:30am Bible Study	**11**	**12**
13 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour **11am Worship Volunteer Training**	**14** 11am Prayer Group	**15** 6pm Bible Study	**16** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**17** 9:30am Bible Study	**18**	**19**
20 10am Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**21** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Church Council **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**22** 6pm Bible Study	**23** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee **6pm Picnic & Worship at Lions Park Beach**	**24** 9:30am Bible Study **Soup Kitchen Day**	**25**	**26**
27 10am Worship with Zoom Option **Baptisms** **New Members Joining** **School Year Blessing** NO Learning Hour	**28** 11am Prayer Group	**29** 6pm Bible Study	**30** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**31** 9:30am Bible Study		